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QUESTION OF PALESTINE

THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND OTHER ARABS OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

Letter dated 4 August 1997 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have been instructed to bring the following to your immediate attention. Israel, the occupying Power, has been imposing a land and sea blockade on the Palestinian territory. It has blocked its borders with the Palestinian territory and, through the use of force, has blocked the borders between the Palestinian territory and Egypt and Jordan and has prevented the use of the sea of Gaza by Palestinian boats. In addition, the Israeli occupation army has imposed a siege on Palestinian cities and villages in the West Bank, effectively isolating them from each other, confining the movement of persons and preventing the transport of goods.

The above actions and measures are causing all forms of suffering to the Palestinian people, including shortages of food and medical supplies and total economic destruction. Those actions and measures constitute an act of aggression by Israel against the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority.

* A/52/150.

** An identical letter addressed to the President of the Security Council has been issued as document S/1997/609.

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Furthermore, the Israeli Government has taken several other hostile measures, including blocking the transfer of important amounts of funds belonging to the Palestinian Authority and even issuing an arrest warrant against the head of the Palestinian police force. The Government has also threatened military operations in the areas under the Palestinian Authority.

All of the above come in addition to the continuation of illegal settler colonialism against all relevant United Nations resolutions, including the resolutions recently overwhelmingly adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth emergency special session, as well as in violation of the agreements reached between the two sides.

The Israeli Government claims that the actions and measures mentioned above are being taken in response to the bombings of 30 July 1997 in West Jerusalem, which the Palestinian side unequivocally condemned. Obviously, however, the Israeli actions and measures are directed against the Palestinian people as a whole, as well as against the Palestinian Authority. These actions represent an unprecedented form of collective punishment and they do not serve, and indeed run contrary to, the purpose of fighting violence and extremism. We are increasingly convinced that these actions and measures are politically motivated and that the Government of Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu is trying to pre-empt any possible progress in the peace process and perhaps destroy it altogether.

The Israeli act of aggression and all other illegal Israeli actions and measures require action by the international community, and specifically by the Security Council, with the aim of bringing an immediate end to those actions and measures and reversing their destructive and dangerous impact.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of this letter distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under items 36, 37 and 87 of the provisional agenda.

(Signed) Nasser AL-KIDWA
Permanent Observer of Palestine
to the United Nations